

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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FM AMEMBASSY ATHENS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2936

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USMISSION NATO

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USDOCOSOUTH

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COMSIXTHFLT

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: MPOL GR OVIP (TURNER, FREDERICK, VICE ADMIRAL)

SUBJ: COMMANDER SIXTH FLEET VISIT TO ATHENS - PRESS COVERAGE

1. COMMANDER OF THE SIXTH FLEET, VICE ADMIRAL FREDERICK TURNER, COMMENCES THREE-DAY VISIT TO ATHENS MARCH 3. HE IS EMBARKED ON HIS FLAGSHIP, THE CRUISER "LITTLE ROCK".

2. ATHENS PRESS COVERAGE OF THE VISIT COMMENCED MARCH 2 STIMULATED BY A SMALL PIECE IN THE LONDON TIMES MARCH 1 DATED LINED ATHENS AND FILED BY ITS CORRESPONDENT (MARIO MODIANO). THAT PIECE MENTIONED THAT THE IMPENDING VISIT WOULD BE THE FIRST SINCE THE FALL OF THE DICTATORSHIP AND RECALLED THAT THE SIXTH FLEET HAD SUFFERED PARTICULARLY AS A RESULT OF THE STRAIN IN GREEK-AMERICAN RELATIONS CAUSED BY THE BLAME PLACED ON AMERICANS BY THE
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GREEK PEOPLE FOR THE TURKISH INVASION OF CYPRUS.

3. FOR THE MOST PART, THE PRESS OF MARCH 2 CARRIED BRIEF ANNOUNCEMENTS OF THE VISIT NOTING THAT ADMIRAL TURNER WOULD BE CALLING ON DEFENSE MINISTER AVEROFF AND TOP GREEK MILITARY LEADERS. ESTIA (ULTR-CONSERVATIVE) ADDED THE NOTE THAT AUTHORITATIVE SOURCES STRESSED THAT THE TURNER VISIT HAD NO RELATION WITH THE QUESTION OF AMERICAN NAVAL BASES IN GREECE, AND REMINDED ITS READERS IN THIS CONNECTION THAT AS A RESULT OF BASE NEGOTIATIONS HOMEPORTING FACILITIES HAD BEEN ABOLISHED. THE MORNING PRESS OF MARCH 3 FOR THE MOST PART ALSO GAVE BRIEF FACTUAL ACCOUNTS OF THE VISIT. TO VIMA (LIBERAL, OPPOSITION), HOWEVER, MENTIONS IN THE SAME STORY THE FACT THAT DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EUROPEAN AFFAIRS BRUCE LAINGEN IS ALSO VISITING ATHENS.

4. RIZOSPASTIS (COMMUNIST, EXTERIOR) CARRIES LEAD FRONT PAGE STORY ENTITLED "NEW RAW INTERVENTION OF U.S. AND NATO IN POLITICAL LIFE OF OUR COUNTRY". IN ITS STORY IT COMBINES THEMES OF TURNER VISIT WITH THAT OF LAINGEN - AND JOINS THEM WITH THE "PARALLEL AND COORDINATED INITIATIVES OF TURKISH CHAUVINISTS AND INTERNAL CIRCLES OF ANOMALY" -- TO BUILD A CASE THAT A COLD WAR CLIMATE IS BEING CREATED AND THAT "AMERICAN IMPERIALISM IS INTERVENING IN THE POLITICAL LIFE OF GREECE". RIZOSPASTIS ALSO CARRIES AN EDITORIAL ATTACKING THE TURNER VISIT.

5. FINALLY, KATHIMERINI (INDEPENDENT, PRO-GOVERNMENT) TODAY PRINTS A GOOD SIZED STORY ON AN INNER PAGE DEVOTED SOLELY TO THE VISIT OF ADMIRAL TURNER. HOWEVER, IT CONFUSES THE SIXTH FLEET COMMANDER WITH ADMIRAL STANSFIELD TURNER, WHO IN FACT IS CINCSOUTH. IT THEN QUOTES FROM PUBLISHED REMARKS LATE LAST FALL OF ADMIRAL STANSFIELD TURNER RELEVANT TO NATO RELATIONS AND THE NEED FOR WESTERN ALLIES TO BE PREPARED FOR THE POSSIBILITY OF SOVIET AGGRESSION. AGAINST THAT BACKGROUND, IT STATES "WE WILL HAVE TO SEE WHAT IS THE MESSAGE WHICH STANSFIELD TURNER NOW BRINGS WITH HIM".

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6. IN AFTERNOON PRESS MARCH 3, LITTLE ROCK/COMSIXTH FLT PRESENCE HERE RECEIVED MINIMAL ATTENTION WITH THE STORY, WHERE IT DOES APPEAR, CARRIED AS SMALL BOX NEWS ITEM. KUBISCH

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